

BARSTOW LOG

SUPPORTING MCLB'S VISION FOR THE 21ST CENTURY

Vol. 7, No. 13

Marine Corps Logistics Base Barstow, California

April 3, 2003

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Marines reduce accidents with Operational Risk Management

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Mail addresses people can use to send troops moral support.

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Spring Forward

Daylight Savings Time begins Sunday at 2 a.m.

Check out the Marine Corps Web site.

<http://www.usmc.mil>

BARSTOW LOG
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<https://www.barstow.usmc.mil>



U.S. Navy photo by Chief Journalist Alan J. Baribeau

The guided missile destroyer USS Donald Cook (DDG 75) leads a five-ship armada conducting underway operations in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. See more photos of Operation Iraqi Freedom on Pages 6 and 7.

Key Volunteer Network expanded to civilian personnel

By Cpl. Joshua Barnhardt
Editor

The Key Volunteer Network is expanding its membership to spouses of civilian employees.

Some civilians aboard MCLB Barstow have recently been deployed overseas. The KVN is in place to provide support and direction to spouses of deployed personnel, said Lt. Col. Charles Hamilton, base executive officer. The KVN was expanded to help civilian spouses as well as military spouses because the majority of the base work force is made up of civilian Marines.

The KVN is an organization designed to provide a community atmosphere for families stationed at Marine Corps installations, said Hamilton. Since most families at Marine Corps bases are far from home, they don't have the close support of family and friends. The KVN is in place to provide that kind of support.

The KVN does not provide ser-

vices, said Hamilton. It provides a network to find out information about services. If a family needs to find a veterinarian because their pet is sick, then somebody else in the KVN might know a place they can go, said Hamilton.

Since most civilian Marines are from this area, they may already have the close family and friends support they need if their spouse is deployed, said Hamilton. The option to participate in the KVN is just extended to spouses of civilian Marines as another avenue of support if they want to take advantage of it.

To become a part of the KVN, spouses of military personnel and civilian personnel can call the family readiness officer at 577-6556. The KVN also holds a meeting the second Wednesday of each month at the Oasis Club at 4:30 p.m.

Another way to find out information and join is to come to the MCLB Barstow Town Hall Meeting the third Wednesday of each month at 6 p.m. at the Youth Activities Center.

Marines heal injuries, want return to fight

By Sgt. Joseph R. Chenelly
1st Marine Expeditionary Force

LOGISTICAL SUPPORT AREA VIPER, Iraq - Amid a grimy, gritty battlefield, wounded Marines are receiving medical care in a sterile environment. The contrast between the surrounding filth and the stark-white gauze symbolizes the difference between the Marines' appearance and morale.

The sight of bloodied, bandaged Marines laying on flimsy, green cots in southern Iraq was a disheartening scene, March 27. But the wounded wouldn't let their misfortune get them down.

First Sgt. Bruce H. Cole, shot in a fierce firefight just three hours earlier, couldn't sleep because of his thoughts about "my boys" with 2nd Battalion, 5th Marine Regiment.

Lance Cpl. Roche L. Rodriguez grunted as he strained to sit up. The Navy doctors said his left leg may be broken and his shoulder is separated, but the reservist rifleman with G Company, 2nd Battalion, 23rd Marine Regiment, claims he will return to action soon.

These two Marines are among the many combat-scarred leathernecks in the 60-bed facility, which was established by Combat Service Support Group 15 during the first few days of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

A few Marines with a unit near the hospital, Combat Service Support Battalion 18, have come over with the intention of helping keep wounded troops in good spirits.

"We've seen a lot of medevacs coming in," said 1st Sgt. Reginald P. Kier, 41, who is from Texas. "Our captain thought it would be a good idea to come over to talk to some of the Marines. We want to be there in case they want or need to talk about what they've been through."

The visiting Marines found morale already high. "They might be motivating me more than I can help them," Kier said. "It is impressive that so many want to get back to the fight."

"They've gone through a lot. They're in pain now, yet they're not brushing us off or showing their pain."

Some of the stories heard in the recovery ward were harrowing stories of deadly shootouts and ter-

rrible accidents.

1st Sgt. Cole is a 39-year-old from Beaumont, Texas. He was with 2/5 spearheading an attack northward on Iraqi Highway 1, March 27, when he ran into sporadic but heavy small arms fire from Iraqi soldiers dressed as civilians.

"The terrain was kind of restrictive," Cole said. "We had to stick to the MSR (main supply route), which gave the enemy the advantage. It allowed them to just lie behind numerous berms that run parallel to Route 1, up and down, some as close as 50 meters off the route."

"It was very difficult because it was a moderately populated area," he continued. "There were many houses along the MSR. A lot of civilian men, women and children were standing outside their little houses watching what was going on. The next thing you know more men popped up with rifles and started shooting. It is hard to pick the good guys from the bad guys."

2nd Tank Battalion was screening 2/5's move-

See **FIGHT** Page 3

Safety summary says Marines using ORM successfully

ALMAR 021/03

Headquarters Marine Corps

During the month of February 2003, three Marines died in on- and off-duty ground accidents, and 16 suffered significant injuries. The following is a summary of the casualties for the month of February 2003:

Fatalities:

No Marines died from on-duty accidents this month.

Three Marines died in off-duty accidents this month. A corporal from 2d LAAD Bn., MACG-28, 2d MAW, lost control of his vehicle and impacted a tree, resulting in his death. A lance corporal from VMFA-224 laid down on the road and was struck and killed by a vehicle. A corporal from MALS-36, 1st MAW, drowned while scuba diving.

Suicides: None.

Injuries:

Nine Marines sustained serious on-duty injuries in February. A captain attending military freefall school collided with another student while descending to the drop zone. A staff noncommissioned officer fell approximately 30 feet to the ground, resulting in a broken hip, broken left arm and a laceration to his forehead. A second lieutenant from 3d Bn., 5th Marines, 1st MARDIV, received shrapnel to his right arm from a grenade during grenade training. A captain from MALS-39, MAG-39, 3rd MAW, fell from a pallet, breaking his left wrist. A staff sergeant from 1st Tank Bn., 1st MARDIV, was injured while driving the lead HMMWV in a 37-vehicle convoy, when he struck another vehicle. The Marine suffered lacerations to his lower left leg and was evacuated for treatment. A lance corporal from

5th Marines, 1st MARDIV, Camp Doha, accidentally stabbed himself in his right eye while attempting to open a MRE box with a knife. The Marine's condition is listed as serious. A corporal from 5th LAR, 1st MARDIV, lost control on a military 250cc motorcycle, resulting in a dislocated right ankle and multiple fractures. A private first class from 3rd LAR Bn. accidentally shot himself in the left foot while cleaning his rifle. He underwent surgery and is in stable condition. A lance corporal from MWSS-271, MWSG-27, 2nd MAW, fractured his left ankle in three places when he fell while moving decking, and the decking fell on his leg. A lance corporal from 3rd Bn., 11th Marines, 1st MARDIV, lost the tip of the right side of his nose when the tailgate of a 5-ton vehicle he was standing behind was lowered and struck him in the face. Fortunately, doctors were able to

surgically reattach his nose.

Seven Marines were seriously injured in off-duty accidents. Five of the accidents occurred in automobiles, one on an all-terrain vehicle (ATV), and the last a pedestrian mishap. Two Marines from 8th ESB, 2nd FSSG, were seriously injured when the driver of their vehicle fell asleep. The vehicle left the road traveling approximately 60 mph and struck a brick wall in a driveway. The driver and one other passenger (both lance corporals) received minor injuries, while a private first class underwent exploratory surgery for possible abdominal bleeding. Another lance corporal is currently on a ventilator because he cannot maintain an open airway due to severe facial trauma. All occupants were wearing belts, which in all likelihood saved their lives. A lance corporal from 6th Comm. Bn.

See SAFETY Page 10

War tests the human soul

By Lt. Cmdr. Randel Livingood
Base Chaplain



As our nation continues the war in Iraq I am reminded of how "real" the war has become. It seems that with the up-to-the-moment coverage we see that we are getting these snippets of the war and we see the destruction and cost in lives in a very intimate manner. I listen carefully and words like "one thousand Iraqi casualties" come floating out of the reporter's mouth almost as though it were just another statistic. I see the wounded coalition forces and begin to think how real things have become. As a nation we are now past the time of the faceless, nameless enemy of previous wars. Now we see them face to face, eye to eye. There is an old saying that, while not always accurate, points in the right direction; "There are no atheists in a foxhole." As I said, not always accurate but what it does say is that these are times which test our souls. These are days in which the crucible becomes hotter and each of us who will look is forced to see deeper than we mostly want to. Partly because we are

not used to looking which such introspection and partly because we fear what we will see with such clarity. But look we must. The search to find meaning in our actions, the search to others as human beings, the search to find some sort of consolation amongst the ruin of war. All difficult tasks that demand us to look deeply into our own personhood.

One comment which has played out over and over is that bad people get what they deserve. That has been said on numerous occasions and repeated often. I always cringe at that simply because I know what I deserve. Yes, I believe that I am basically a law-abiding person. Hopefully, I am living up to my priestly vows of obedience and am doing my best to fulfill my obligations as a person of faith. But what do I deserve? I imagine that if I were held accountable for each infraction of God's law that I have committed I would be in spiritual "jail" for a very long time. What is noteworthy about this process is that we know ourselves better than anyone else and we know that if we got the punishment that we truly deserve it would probably be pretty strenuous. So as we face the days and weeks ahead I would like to suggest that as we search our own lives and those things which

See CHAPLAIN Page 3

Just doing my job ...

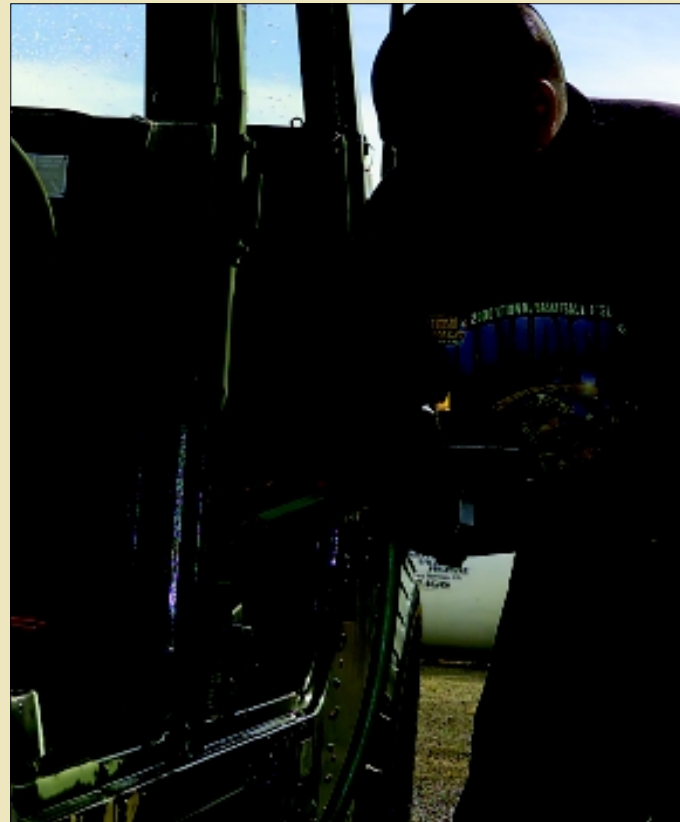


Photo by Sgt. Joseph Lee

Richard Chavira, heavy mobile equipment repairman for Fleet Support Division, washes out the interior of an M998 High Mobility Multi-Wheel Vehicle that will soon be deployed to Kuwait for assistance in Operation Iraqi Freedom.

Chapel Services

Protestant Sun. 8:30 a.m.
Mass Sun. 10:30 a.m.

**Confession services
before Mass**

Catholic Rosary

First Saturday of every month at 3 p.m. at the Base Chapel.
Call 577-6849 for more information.

Morning Prayer

Mon.-Fri. at 8:30 a.m. at the ASD Conference Room, Building 15.
Call 577-6849 for more information.



BARSTOW LOG

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For information on advertising in **BARSTOW LOG**, contact Paul Kinison of Aerotech News, Lancaster, Calif., phone: (661) 945-5634.

News Briefs

"News Briefs" is designed to disseminate information to the MCLB Barstow community. Submissions should include a point of contact and phone number, and be received by noon Thursdays for the next week's issue. Submit news briefs via e-mail to editor@barstow.usmc.mil.

Civilian Service Pins

There has been a delay in the issuance of the Marine Corps Civilian Service Pin. The Commandant of the Marine Corps authorized the distribution of the pins in February 2003. Due to a delay in manufacturing, it is now estimated the pins will be available in June 2003. For questions or more information contact Shaunna Arguelles in the Human Resources Office at 760-577-6914 or DSN 282-6914.

Chapel Services

The Marine Memorial Chapel will be open for those who wish to support the troops and families with prayers from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. Mondays through Fridays.

For questions or concerns, contact

the Base Chapel at 577-6849.

Special Olympics breakfast

The Barstow Special Olympics is having a Pancake Breakfast April 12, from 8 a.m. to 11 a.m. at the Barstow Fire Protection District Headquarters, 861 Barstow Rd.

A donation of \$2.50 is asked for the meal, and there will be plenty of food for all, as well as games, balloons and a drawing for prizes. For more information, contact Susan Sorensen at (760) 255-2787.

Motorcycle Safety Course

There will be a motorcycle safety course Friday from 7 a.m. to 3 p.m. at the Base Safety Classroom in Building 236.

The course is mandatory for anyone who wants to ride a motorcycle aboard MCLB Barstow.

Participants need to bring a California M1 or M2 driver's license or permit, a helmet, full-fingered gloves, a reflective vest, a long sleeve shirt or jacket and hard soled shoes.

To sign up for the course, or for more information, call Steve Waugh at 577-6448.

Universal Studios offer

Universal Studios Hollywood is offering free admission for active duty military, or spouses of deployed personnel, with the purchase of one full price adult admission until April 30. To take advantage of this offer, present a military I.D. card at the box office.



Support deployed service members in more ways than one

By Pfc. Andy J. Hurt
BARSTOW LOG staff

Although current Department of Defense policy prohibits sending mail from patriotic individuals or organizations to deployed troops, recently published guidelines provide alternatives to well-intentioned citizens wishing to communicate with loved ones overseas.

According to a recent DOD news release, several organizations are sponsoring programs for service members deployed overseas to communicate effectively with their families. The Department does not endorse these programs, however, service members greatly appreciate and value any such expressions of support.

Calling cards can be donated to keep troops in touch with families at Operation Uplink, www.operationuplink.org.

Greeting cards may be sent via e-mail through Operation Dear Abby at www.OperationDearAbby.net or anyservicemember.navy.mil.

Virtual thank-you cards may be sent through Defend America at <http://defendamerica.mil>.

Donations to military relief societies are accepted at <http://laerbq.org/links.htm> and Army Emergency Relief at <http://laerbq.org>.

The Navy and Marine Corps Relief Society can be reached at www.nmcrs.org.

The Air Force Aid Society can be reached at <http://lafas.org>.

Coast Guard Mutual Assistance: <http://cgmahq.org>.

Donations can be made to the United Service Organization "Operation USO care package" at <http://usometrodc.org/care.html>.

Support for the American Red Cross Emergency Services: www.redcross.org/services/afes.

If you wish to volunteer at a VA Hospital and honor veterans who bore the lamp of freedom in past conflicts, contact www.va.gov/vetsday, and to support families whose loved ones are being treated at military and VA hospitals, make a donation through the Fisher House at <http://fisherhouse.org>.

The Department encourages family members to reach out to military families in your community, especially those with loved ones overseas, but asks that the military mail system does not get flooded with letters, cards and gifts.

Due to security concerns and transportation constraints, the department does not accept items addressed to "any servicemember." Individuals have tried to avoid the prohibition by sending a large number of packages to the "any service member" address, but the Department warns that these well-intentioned gestures only clog the mail and cause unnecessary delays in the mail.

According to the department, the support and generosity of the American people has touched the lives of many service members, over 300,000 of which are deployed overseas.

Job Watch

Ann. No.	Title/Series/Grade	Open	Close	1st Cutoff	Location
5423	Sandblaster WG-5423-07 (Term NTE 366 Days)	03-28-03	04-04-03	N/A	MCLB Barstow
7009	Equipment Cleaner WG-7009-05 (Term NTE 366 Days)	03-27-03	03-04-03	N/A	MCLB Barstow

Applicants interested in announcements beginning with DEA or OTR should submit their résumé to:

Human Resources Service Center, Southwest
ATTN: Code 522 (announcement number)
525 B Street, Suite 600
San Diego, CA 92101-4418

For more information concerning public job announcements visit the Self-Service Center, Building 236, Mondays through Fridays from 7 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. or call the Human Resources Office, 577-6357.

If you have Internet access, browse to <http://www.usajobs.opm.gov>.

For information regarding Open Continuous Merit Promotion announcements point your browser to <http://www.donbr.navy.mil>.

This is not an official list. Please see the Web sites listed for a complete list.

FIGHT from Page 1

ments, but they were restricted to the MSR as well.

"The only engagements the armored had were with people stupid enough to shoot at them with their rifles," he said staring at the green, canvas ceiling in the medical tent. "Softer vehicles within the attack, the humvees, were just easy targets for them."

The first sergeant was in a humvee shooting back.

"We were cruising and fighting from our humvees, trying to get through the ambush sites as quickly as possible.

"We were taking some pretty intensive 7.62 (millimeter rounds) from the right flank," he said. "I was returning fire, engaging some targets that were entrenched 100 meters off the MSR. As I was returning fire, he was returning fire."

An enemy's bullet found its way into Cole's lower right arm and exited near his tricep. His troops immediately brought him to an armored ambulance. Shortly after, he was in the

recovery tent at Logistical Support Area Viper.

From his cot, which didn't even have a pillow, Cole acknowledged his true fortune.

"A gunny from combat engineers, who was with us, was shot and killed just before I was hit. I know I'm lucky."

Cole said he couldn't stop thinking about his Marines. He wonders, "How did that battle finish? Who else was hit? How are they? What follow-on missions have my boys been tasked with?"

It may be some time before he can get those answers. Navy corpsmen say he'll leave Iraq soon.

With a bit of emotion in his voice, Cole asked to send his Marines still fighting a simple message, "Charge on!"

The message was sent to his battalion via radio traffic March 28.

1st Lt. James R. Uwins is a 26-year-old Truck Platoon commander. He was attached to Headquarters Co., 2nd Battalion, 8th Marines. Now he is laid up with shrapnel wounds on his face, shoulders, arms and legs. The native of South Pasadena, Calif., was

moving vital combat supplies March 26.

"We had just set in for the night when a security patrol on the perimeter was ambushed," Uwins said. "About half of a dozen vehicles were taken out by small arms fire, RPGs (rocket propelled grenades) and motors."

Artillery and mortars began impacting 100 yards from his position. He was hit several times. Initially, he thought he had been shot. "I was relieved to find just shrapnel wounds."

Uwins, along with his Marines immediately returned fire, he said. "They helped spread-load the ammo as needed when people started running short. I want them to know that they've done a great job so far, and I am proud of them. I know they'll keep it up."

"It's a dirty battle out there. My Marines are ready to kick more ass. I know they will fight with a vengeance."

Lance Cpl. Rodriguez is a 22-year-old reservist rifleman who may be going home to Los Angeles before he is ready.

See FIGHT Page 4

CHAPLAIN from Page 2

make us who we are that we try and turn the glaring spotlight off of others and toward ourselves. Yes, it is easier to see the faults of others, but it doesn't help us to become better

people and frankly it only helps us to de-humanize others. Let us search for humanity until we find it and let us find it in ourselves first.

Peace,
Fr Randel

War on TV affects students of deployed parents, parents, teachers

By Sgt. 1st Class Doug Sample
American Forces Press Service

Many children may not understand the principles and politics behind America's war with Iraq or the war on terrorism, but nonetheless they see images and hear news in the media.

The frightening images of war being brought daily to homes throughout America can be disturbing enough for adults, but they're even more so for children, especially those whose parents are deployed, said Joseph Tafoya, director of the Department of Defense Education Activity.

"Some of the scenes we're seeing are hard for us as adults to understand," Tafoya said. "If an adult has difficulty understanding the ramifications of this, or why this is happening or why this is occurring, you can imagine that a younger child is going to be inundated. It's going to heighten their concerns."

Those concerns, he said, are why parents should be aware of what their children watch on the news and should talk with them about what they've learned.

"As a parent, you should want to know what your child is watching and be able to address those issues honestly with your child at home," he said. "Some of the things you see on television are not fit for young children, so you need to understand what they're hearing on the radio, watching on TV or observing online and have an honest discussion about those issues."

Teachers may not have been directed to do anything different within the education system, but he said that teachers are always encouraged to get to know their students well and to look out for those who exhibit signs of stress or loneliness.

"If they need to just talk to someone, then someone needs to be there

to just listen to them or just reassure them that they are cared for and that they are safe," he said. "Teachers who see behavior that is not normal with their students need to be sensitive and work with them and try to be understanding."

Because current U.S. affairs have meant increased deployments, Tafoya said that DODEA teachers, counselors and staff are there to help students, before, during and after deployments. Parents or guardians of students in non-DODEA schools may want to contact their local schools to find out what kind of support the schools are prepared to provide.

"Just because a war is over doesn't mean it's over, and just because a parent comes back doesn't mean everything is going to be great," he said. "When a parent is gone for six months to a year, household routines have changed. The child may still have concerns."

FIGHT from Page 3

Riding in the back of a 7-ton truck just south of the Iraqi city of Al-Kut, Rodriguez's early morning, March 27, was violently turned upside down.

"It was so dark you couldn't even see your hand in front of your face," he said. "It was about two in the morning, I was half asleep. Before I knew it there were sandbags from the truck flying through the air. We were all flying through the air."

When the truck, which had just rolled off a bridge, came to jarring halt, Rodriguez knew he was going to make it, but he wasn't so sure about his buddies.

"I was very worried about one of my fellow Marines to the left of me," he said. "He was motionless. I was very afraid something serious had happened to him. I also was worried about the rest of my fire team. I'm just happy everyone is still alive."

Rodriguez was transported to the field hospital by an Army Blackhawk helicopter. Doctors believe his left leg is broken. He also separated his shoulder.

"I don't believe that anything is broken," Rodriguez said. "I'm just anxious to get back with my unit."

I've trained with these guys for four years. I want to be with them now."

The reserve infantry unit 2/23 has been mobilized since the terrorist attacks of Sept. 11, 2001. Rodriguez and his fellow Marines acted as the anti-terrorism force for more than a year at Marine Corps Base Camp Pendleton, Calif.

They deployed to the Middle East in November 2002 to serve as the security element for Camp Commando, Kuwait. Now they are taking part in combat operations in the war against Saddam Hussein's regime.

The war may be over for Rodriguez. He was flown to another medical facility outside Iraq March 28.

Sgt. Christopher Merkel, a machine gunner, is also a reservist with 2/23. He is a 31-year-old who lives in San Clemente, Calif., when not deployed.

Merkel was in the same truck as Rodriguez when it rolled.

"We were on a counter attack movement," Merkel said. "There was no natural illumination. The bridge wasn't on the map. We plunged over, but we really lucked

See FIGHT Page 10

GOT NEWS? *If you think you've got something newsworthy call the public affairs office at 577-6430.*

Composite score gateway into NCO ranks

By Sgt. Joseph Lee
BARSTOW LOG staff

Competition for the noncommissioned officer ranks in the Marine Corps can be a frustrating and confusing issue for lance corporals and corporals who don't understand how the composite and cutting score system works.

Every military occupational specialty has a different numerical score for promotion to corporal and sergeant derived every month by Headquarters Marine Corps, which a Marine must meet to be promoted to that rank. This number is known as the cutting score.

Lance corporals and corporals who have met their time in service and time in grade requirements to move on to the next rank acquire a personalized numerical score compiled from various individual training and performance accomplishments. This number is known as the composite score.

According to Cpl. James Castro, promotions clerk for the Administration and Support Department, an eligible Marine's composite score is calculated prior to the start of every fiscal quarter.

"Once the score has been computed and is in the system, which is usually about three to five days prior to that quarter's beginning, it will remain effective throughout the quarter unless there are remedial corrections which have to be made," said Castro. "This type of change may affect a Marine's score in

the middle of the quarter."

Because Marines are promoted on the first of the month, a new cutting score is released by HQMC for promotion to corporal and sergeant in each MOS approximately a week prior to the start of a new month. To be eligible for promotion, a Marine's composite score must meet or exceed the appropriate cutting score.

"The cutting scores are computed according to information provided to HQMC by each base's comptroller. Information on how many corporals and sergeants were promoted in each MOS helps HQMC establish a number of additional NCOs that are needed in a particular MOS," said Castro. "This is what determines whether the score rises or falls. Assuming a Marine has been recommended for promotion, when the score is released, about four or five days prior to the new month, we will acquire the information on who is to be promoted."

There are many different items that contribute to a Marine's total composite score every quarter.

"How well a Marine performs on the rifle range, during a PFT, and while at work doing his job all affect the total composite score," said Castro. "Additional items such as education, special tours of duty, and assistance with recruiting also account for a certain portion of the score."

According to Castro, in order to have

new information such as a new rifle score or more education points entered into the system in time to increase a Marine's composite score for an upcoming quarter, there is a deadline for all new information to be submitted to the administration department.

"Approximately forty days prior to the start of the new quarter is the cut-off date to submit any new training to the S-1," said Castro. "For instance, for the January, February, March quarter of 2003, the cut-off date was November 20, 2002. If the information is not submitted in time for the upcoming quarter, then the Marine's composite score will not be affected by that new information until the following quarter."

Besides annual training requirements, there are additional contributors to the composite score that a Marine can capitalize on early to be competitive for promotion even before time in service and time in grade requirements have been met.

"The Marine Corps Institute courses and off-duty college classes can give Marines up to 75 extra points towards promotion," said Castro. "MCI's should be entered into the system by the people at MCI who grade the exams, but all off-duty education needs to be submitted to S-1 if a Marine intends to get points credited towards their promotion."

Though the MCIs should be entered automatically, Marines should follow up

on MCIs to make sure they are in the system, or they may find that the points never made it onto the system when they were supposed to.

Lance Cpl. Erik Dortch, TAD clerk for the adjutant office, knows first hand the importance of following up on MCI submissions to ensure the appropriate work gets entered into the system on time.

"One of my MCIs that I did was never scored and entered into the system as it should have been," said Dortch. "That one MCI, because it's worth 15 points on my score, could have been the difference in my promotion to corporal last month. Now, since the information never got entered, my composite score for next quarter is sitting at the exact score that was published for this month. I have to wait and see if the score goes up or down. If it goes up even one point, I won't get promoted."

The cutting score rising is just one scenario that could keep Dortch from being promoted. There is also the chance that the score will close out.

"When a score closes out, HQMC has met its need for corporals or sergeants in that particular MOS, and as a way of not promoting any more, they simply close out the score for that MOS."

Fortunately, there are many things Marines can do to ensure the correct and most current information is being run in the system.

"They can call MCI, or they could check their (basic training record and basic individual record) on Marine Online to make sure their training is up-to-date or see where their composite score stands compared to others the same rank in their MOS," said Castro. "They can also always call the S-1 to check on whether new information has been entered into the system."

"For a Marine charging through to the NCO ranks, knowledge of how the composite and cutting score system works is one of the most valuable tools that Marine can possess," said 1st Sgt. Joseph Vanfonda, Headquarters Battalion first sergeant. "A Marine should always be up to speed on what he or she needs to make the cut to be promoted, and knowing how the composite score system works can be that instrumental key that allows a Marine to accomplish future endeavors. The system really isn't that confusing if you take the time to calculate your own score sometime to gain a better understanding of how the different elements of your training and performance evaluations affect your total score."

Editor's Note:
Marine Corps Institute can be reached at 1-800-MCI-USMC, and Marines can access Marine Online at <https://www.mci.usmc.mil>.

Images of Operation Iraqi Freedom

Photographs from the front lines and forward areas



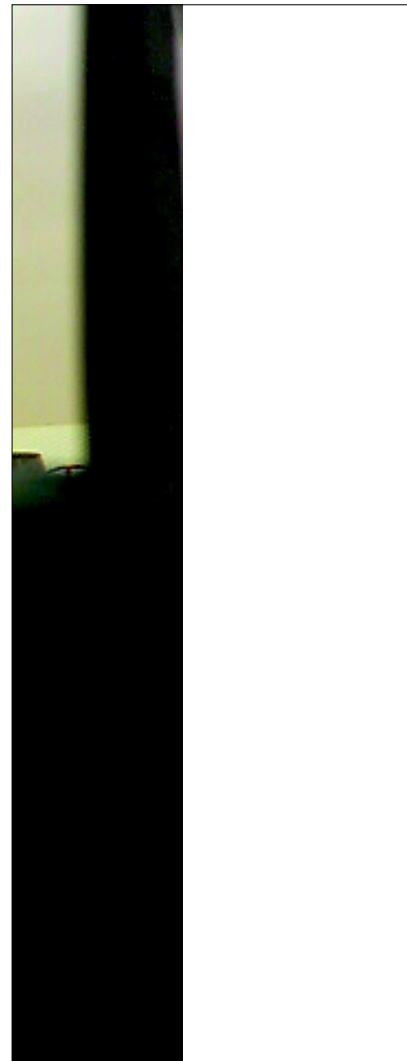
U.S. Marine Corps photo by Lance Cpl. Matthew J. Decker
Brigadier J. B. Dutton, commanding officer, 3 Commando Brigade, British Royal Marines signs a 155mm howitzer round that was set to be the first field artillery round fired into Iraq during Operation Iraqi Freedom, March 20.



U.S. Air Force photo by Staff Sgt. Derrick C. Goode
A crew chief from the 334th Expeditionary Fighter Squadron, out of Seymour Johnson Air Force Base, S.C., completes a maintenance check on this F-15E Strike Eagle before a night mission on March 30. The Strike Eagles are assigned to this forward-deployed air base in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom.



U.S. Marine Corps photo by Lance Cpl. Matthew J. Decker
In support of Operation Iraqi Freedom, a Marine 155mm howitzer sends balls of fire in the air as it fires, March 24.



410 Expeditionary Security Forces Squadron men location in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom March 2003



Lt. Col. Alan King of the 422nd Civil Affairs Battalion some sweets during a follow up visit to the boys fa by earlier in the week to check a well and see how



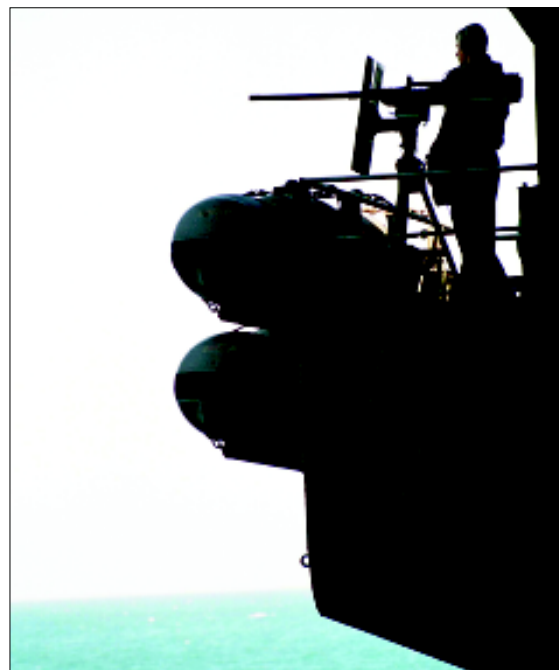
U.S. Air Force by Staff Sgt. Samuel A. Park

410 Expeditionary Security Forces Squadron member, 410 Air Expeditionary Wing, keeps a vigilant eye over the front gate during a heavy sandstorm with M-60 automatic machine gun at a forward undisclosed location in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom March 26.



U.S. Army photo by Staff Sgt. Kevin P. Bell

Lt. Col. Alan King of the 422nd Civil Affairs Battalion rewards the warm welcome he received from an Iraqi boy with some sweets during a follow up visit to the boy's father's home in central Iraq, March 29. The C.A. unit had stopped by earlier in the week to check a well and see how the residents were doing.



A lone sailor stands watch with one of the .50 caliber gun mounts aboard USS Abraham Lincoln (CVN 72) March 29, 2003. Lincoln is currently deployed in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom, the multi-national coalition effort to liberate the Iraqi people, eliminate Iraq's weapons of mass destruction, and end the regime of Saddam Hussein.

U.S. Navy photo by Photographer's Mate 3rd Class Elizabeth Bartneck



Photo by Pfc. Andy J. Hurt

Gilroy, a pure-bred Golden Lab therapy dog, shares story time with Autumn Hedrick, 8, and Tyler Gardner, 9. Gilroy is a certified "therapy dog" and has visited residents at the Knolls West Residential Home and Sterling Inn Residential Facility in the Victorville area. Gilroy will be available at the base library April 15 and 17 from 1 to 3:30 p.m. To set up a reading appointment, or for more information, contact Robin Cross-Walker at 577-6395.

National Library Week

By Robin Cross-Walker
Base Librarian

National Library Week is April 6 through 12. In observance of this the Marine Corps Community Services base library is using the theme "Explore your adventure ... read."

In 1815, Thomas Jefferson was quoted saying, "I cannot live without books." This is a statement that most of us still live by in today's world, in spite of the media frenzy that we are all currently experiencing. Checking out a good novel at the local library is a good way to relax, and enjoy adventure.

I remember as a small child how my mother kindly took my hand and led me to the local library. This was a very exciting adventure for me. Upon arriving at the library I was given the privilege to select my own titles. This was fun because as a small child I felt responsible, excited and very happy all at the same time.

Most of the titles I selected appeared to be my favorites at first glance, and I always selected titles that I was willing to revisit as many times as I chose to.

The most fascinating thing was becoming a part of the adventure that I was reading. My favorite title was *Belfast*,

a tale about a little girl who wondered along the beach selecting seashells as a personal collection. To this day the beach is my favorite place of relaxation.

I encourage all ages to read books for as long as they are printed. Reading material helps store valuable information and maybe a particular lifestyle you would like to experience in life. Your selections could include vacations, travel, financial, education, poetry, history, biographies, and reference research.

The word library originated from the Latin word *librarius*, which means a collection of books.

There is a whole world that stands alone right inside your MCLB base library. Stop by and discover your adventure as a means to your daily lifestyle. Take the time to select a favorite adventure and live it out first in a book.

During National Library Week, MCLB recognizes James Brewer, a retired Marine and civil service employee, who has been a patron of the MCLB Barstow base library since 1965. Mr. Brewer, I professionally thank you for your commitment to patronize the MCLB Barstow library for so many years and your continuation to be a part of the life long learning and education family.



By Jim Gaines
MCCS Publicity

April Sale

The April Sale at the Super Seven Day Store and the Railhead Exchange will run from April 1 through 15.

The sale will feature super values like these: Kitchen appliances - 2-slice bagel toaster, 5-speed electric hand mixer, citrus juicer, tall can opener, 1-speed food chopper, steam iron - all for \$6.99 each. A BBQ-in-a-box, BBQ grill, one bag of charcoal, and a 3-piece tool set is going for \$14.99. A Hoover upright vacuum cleaner is a super value at \$99.99. Pioneer Home Theater System is slashed \$50. Take it home for \$249.99.

The Super Seven Day Store is open Mondays through Fridays from 6:30 a.m. to 9 p.m., Saturdays from 8 a.m. to 9

p.m. and Sundays from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. For more information call 256-8974.

The Railhead Exchange is open regular hours, Mondays through Fridays from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. It is closed Saturdays and Sundays. During troop rotation, the hours are Mondays through Fridays from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m., Saturdays and Sundays from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. For more information call 577-7782.

Lunch Menu

Unless otherwise indicated, the lunch menu for the Family Restaurant and Cactus Cafe are the same.

Lunch menus subject to change.

Today - Sliced roast sirloin of beef.

Friday - Breaded Hoki fish.

Monday - Chicken tenders.

Tuesday - Beef enchiladas.
Wednesday - Tuna casserole.
Thursday - Baked pork chops.

Family Night Dining

Tonight - Prime Rib Night: \$5.50 first serving, 50 cents per ounce thereafter. It also includes baked potato, vegetables, tossed green salad, fountain drink of your choice and dessert.

Pilates class

The classes start Tuesday at the Base Gym. Get those abs in shape with this Pilates class. For more information call 577-6817.

Children's contests

Children's contests held by Personal Services Division will consist of an art contest and an essay contest.

The art contest involves drawings with crayons, watercolors, sketches, oils, pastels, etc. The essay contest requires 750 words. The theme of both contests is patriotism. Submissions should be turned in the week of April 14 to 19 to the Base Library. Submissions are not to exceed 8-1/2 x 11 paper size. There will be first, second and third place prizes awarded.

There will also be a reading contest at the Base Library with first, second and third place prizes. For more infor-

mation call 577-6395.

Read a book to Gilroy

Gilroy is a lovable Labrador dog. Gilroy loves books about animals. Children 5 to 12 years are invited to read a book to Gilroy.

On April 15 and 17, children from the CDC are invited to read from 10 a.m. to 11 a.m. Children from base housing are invited to read from 1 p.m. to 3 p.m. For more information call 577-6395.

Final Four bash

A Final Four Bash will be held at the Enlisted Club Saturday.

NCAA finals will also be showed at the Enlisted Club on Monday.

All ranks are welcome. For more information call 577-6495.

KVN meeting

There will be a Key Volunteer Network meeting at the Oasis Club Wednesday at 3:30 p.m. For more information call 577-6432.

Twilight Golf Special

Every day starting at 3 p.m. green fees are \$8. The Twilight League is underway - four person teams - call for details. Also ask us about golf lessons and monthly rates. Tees n' Trees

Golf Course is open from 7 a.m. to dusk every day of the week. Call us at 577-6431.

SMP to Staples Center

The Single Marine Program will travel to the Staples Center in Los Angeles for the Arena Football game between the Los Angeles Avengers and the Arizona Rattlers. The trip will be April 13. Transportation will be provided. It is open to single Marines and active duty personnel. For more information call 577-6812.

Flag Football

There will be coaches meeting Tuesday at 10:30 a.m. at the Base Gym. Come in and sign up to be a coach. Now forming teams - all civilian teams must have at least two Marines on the roster.

Flag Football League begins April 28. Rosters are due April 21. For more information call 577-6812.

MAAC

The Marine Alcohol Awareness Course consists of discussions on the USMC policy on alcohol use. It is available to active duty Marines and their family members. The course will be held April 11, from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. at the Building 129 conference room.

SAFETY from Page 2

was injured while attempting to re-enter her vehicle after it started rolling forward. The door of her vehicle crushed her as it collided with a parked car. She is in stable condition and expected to recover. A corporal from MSSG-26, 26th MEU (SOC), was struck by a vehicle while walking in a crosswalk. He suffered a broken right tibia and fibula, but is listed in good condition. A lance corporal from 2nd Bn., 6th Marines, 2nd MARDIV suffered a concussion, fractured vertebrae, and a broken left wrist in an ATV accident. The Marine was wearing his helmet at the time of the accident, which probably saved his life. Two Marines (corporal and lance corporal) from HMMH-772, MCAS New River, were seriously injured when the corporal lost control of his vehicle, causing it to overturn. Both Marines were under the influence of alcohol, and excessive speed is believed to be a contributing factor. Both Marines are in intensive care with a good prognosis.

Aviation: None.
Looking Ahead:
Last fiscal year this time, 39 Marines died in on-duty ground and off-duty accidents, and another 12 in aviation accidents. This fiscal year, 31 Marines have died in on-duty ground and off-duty accidents, and four to aviation accidents.
As the spring rainy season approaches, be aware of the dangers of wet roads.

Wet roads increase the chance of losing control of a vehicle. Hydroplaning can occur when a combination of speed, tire wear, tire inflation, or depth of water on the road causes tires to lose traction. To reduce the risk, ensure tires are properly inflated, the tread is in good condition, adjust speed to road conditions, and turn off cruise control. If hydroplaning occurs, immediately reduce power and avoid sharp braking. If using cruise control, it will continue to apply power to the wheels until disengaged, depriving the driver critical time to safely recover.

Three Marines were lost to off-duty accidents this month, and none to on-duty accidents. This represents a significant improvement over last year, when 13 Marines died during the month of February, five of which were on duty. This is one of many positive steps toward mishap reduction we are glad to report this month. Another positive sign is the reduction in total accident fatalities from this same period last fiscal year, 35 vice 51.

And finally, we continue to see an increase in Marines effectively using operational risk management by wearing required protective safety devices (i.e. seatbelts and helmets). Let's continue to get the word out that ORM works, both on and off duty. Keep up the good work, and stay safe!

Semper Fidelis, M. W. Hagee, General, U.S. Marine Corps, Commandant of the Marine Corps.



Col. Liz Bergman, base commander, delivers her speech as the guest speaker for the Women's History Month luncheon at the Oasis Club March 27.

FIGHT from Page 4

out. We missed the water by 5 feet.”

The sandbags that line the bottom of the truck to protect from mines went flying. “They buried us. It took me five minutes to get myself free, and I was one of the first out. We just started digging people out.”

Merkel suffered a sprained neck and back. Injuries sustained by other Marines included a crushed pelvis and several broken bones.

He is eager to return to the fighting. Before the crash, he saw enemy forces use appalling tactics.

“We’ve seen the bad guys (regime death squads) throw children out of windows at us,” Merkel said shaking his head in disbelief. “Then they actually fired at the children’s feet to make them run at us. They’d use the running kids as shields while they’d move to another defensive position. They’re monsters.”

“We’ve got a lot of young Marines in our unit,” he continued. “I really hate being away from them, especially at a time like this.”

He left the hospital March 28 and finagled a ride from I Marine Expeditionary Force’s command element back to his unit the next day.

“These men have showed real spirit and heart,” Kier said. “It makes me proud to be a Marine. These Marines are giving all they have to give.”

1999 FORD MUSTANG 35TH ANNI-
VERSARY: Automatic, V6, all power,
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\$10,000, OBO, 71K miles, Call 253-
3237 ask for Jr.

1994 JEEP: V8, runs good, asking
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1966 DODGE: Station Wagon, 383
engine, auto, air, runs needs TLC,
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TION: Diesel pusher, 32 ½ ft. long
fully equipped, too much to list, must
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bag and accessories, \$125, Corvair
eng. \$125, Volkswagen, all 4 mag
rims \$55, aluminum awning for car-
port or patio, \$110, Ford Ranger tail-
gate, \$55. Call 254-1913.

MISCELLANEOUS: Large dining
room table with 6 chairs dark oak,
good cond. \$150, OBO; misc. book
hard and soft cover, \$25 takes all;
eleptical trainer \$50, OBO needs
bolt. Call 252-2205.

MISCELLANEOUS: Full size stroller
with removable carrier, like new, \$50;
Play and Go playpen, \$15. Call 256-
4873 (8-5 Lynda) or 253-2677 AWH.

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2 solar barics L5.15, paid \$1,700,
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\$60 OBO; 6-ton jack stand set \$15
OBO; mechanic's creeper \$12 OBO;
Yamaha porta-sound keyboard \$45
OBO. Call 252-4787 or 447-2771.

MISCELLANEOUS: Baby items,
entertainer center \$35 OBO; inter-
com set \$20 OBO; rocking cradle w/
bedding \$65 OBO; large stroller \$80
OBO; small stroller \$35 OBO, swing
set \$35 OBO blues blue blanket
(twin size) w/drapes and sheets \$45
OBO. Call 252-4787 or 447-2771.

MISCELLANEOUS: EZ Up Dome
Tent 8x12 nearly new, \$100; Mizuno
baseball glove MPM 1251, 12 ½
inches, xlt. cond., \$35; tires LT 215-
85-R16. V.G. cond. \$20, P185-70-
R14, V.G. cond. \$15 and P175-70-
R13, xlt. cond. \$10. Call 252-6629.

MISCELLANEOUS: Children's
computer desk with file cabinet and
chair, \$40, OBO. Call 256-1914.

MISCELLANEOUS: Truck cap for
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252-2205.

MISCELLANEOUS: Proform ESP
10 extended stride treadmill, 10
MPH programmable speed, power
incline, 1.5 HP DC motor, adjustable
suspension deck, xlt. cond., \$125.
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WANTED: Honda and Acura car
parts. Call 254-1913.

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